

As the 113th Congress begins to kick in gear, the House of Representatives took a moment on Tuesday last week to read aloud our nation's most sacred document – the Constitution. One by one, Representatives stepped to the microphone to read those hallowed words in the chamber of the House, not as Republicans and not as Democrats, but as Americans. It was a poignant moment that provided some perspective on the purpose of this government and the responsibility our elected leaders have to the people they represent. As I serve you here in the House of Representatives, I take each word of the Constitution to heart. We must never forget the sacrifices that our Founders made in order to create this nation, or the selflessness of the men and women of our all-volunteer military who continue to defend our freedoms each and every day.

This past Monday saw another historic moment as Barack Obama was sworn in for his second term as the 44th President of the United States. I am hopeful that the spirit of patriotism and common purpose that encompassed both the inauguration and the reading of the Constitution during these last few days will continue in the weeks and months to come. Congress and the White House have important work to do.

Several deadlines approach in February and March: disastrous defense cuts are set to take effect, the current law which funds the federal government is expiring, and our nation will also reach its spending limit, often referred to as the “debt ceiling.” It is absolutely critical for our nation's leaders to take realistic, substantive measures to correct the unsustainable path of our federal spending. The national debt continues to grow and, without serious spending reform, our children and grandchildren will be saddled with debt by the carelessness of past generations. At the same time, our government must return to a regular budgeting process, rather than passing temporary spending measures that simply kick the can down the road. Conducting business in such a short-sighted way is simply not responsible governing, nor is it a responsible way to get our fiscal house in order.

The reading of the Constitution last week on the House floor reminded me of something important: This isn't the first challenge that our nation has faced. There have been many difficult periods throughout our history, but the resilience and determination of the people have allowed our country to overcome these challenges. I know that America can find a solution to these difficulties as well. As our Governor Bob McDonnell [wrote to me in a letter last week](#), “I believe that these challenges present a great opportunity to work together.” He is right. Ours is a nation of common sense and hard work, where effective results matter more than petty differences. The American people, on main streets and quiet roads across the First District and this country, will not accept failure.

I look forward to working with each of you to pursue rational, thoughtful policies to get our economy back on track. As always, I can be reached via telephone at (202) 225-4261, through my website ([www.wittman.house.gov](http://www.wittman.house.gov)), on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/robwittman](http://www.twitter.com/robwittman)), and on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/reprobwittman](http://www.facebook.com/reprobwittman)).